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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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November 28, 2025 • Vol. 6, Issue 293 • $5.99

Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

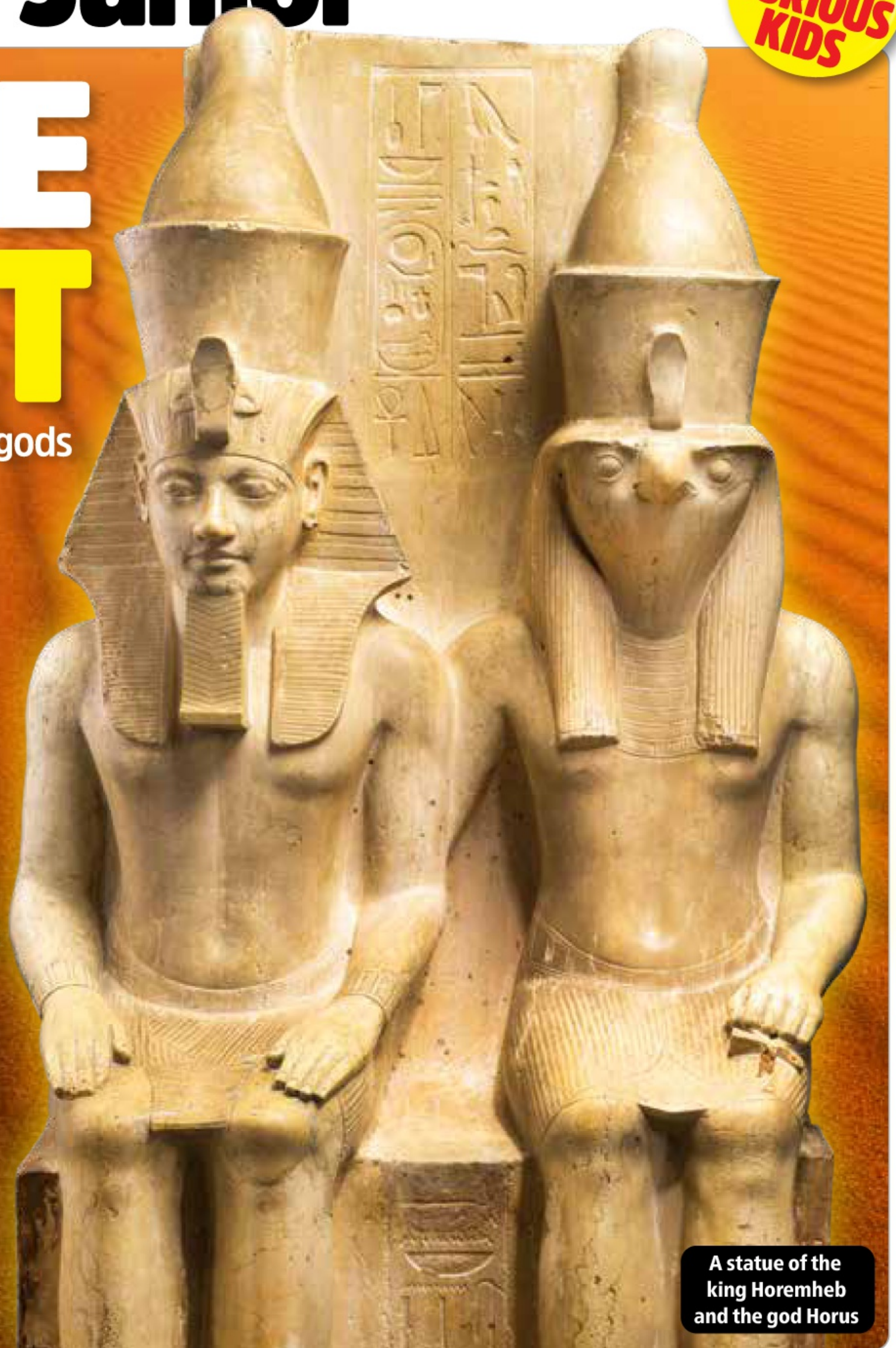
THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

DIVINE EGYPT

Major exhibition about ancient gods opens in New York City p20

DID YOU KNOW?

- The exhibit is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Nearly 250 objects from ancient Egypt are included.
- The artwork focuses on gods and goddesses.



A statue of the king Horemheb and the god Horus

The US Capitol building, where Congress meets

DID YOU KNOW?
The first shutdown of the US government happened in 1976, under President Gerald Ford, and lasted 10 days.

Volunteers step up

During the shutdown, Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado was open to visitors but had no staff to clean up any trash that was left behind. A group of volunteers stepped in, hosting hikes where people picked up litter along the way. "I feel like it's my duty to help," volunteer Monica Strass said.

Federal government reopens

The longest government shutdown in US history ended on November 12, after 43 days. The closure began on October 1 when Congress (branch of government that makes laws) could not agree on the annual budget.

What happened during the shutdown?

About 2 million government workers were suspended without pay. About 750,000 did not work at all, while 1.25 million, including air traffic controllers, military troops, and mail carriers, were considered essential and had to work without pay. On November 1, funding was suspended for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), America's largest anti-hunger program, which provides money for food for about 42 million low-income people. Beginning on November 9, thousands of flights were canceled due to shortages of airport workers, disrupting travel for more than 5 million people. Most national parks stayed open but had no staff to collect entrance fees, help visitors, or handle park maintenance.

The National Zoo is open.

How did the shutdown end?

The first step in ending the shutdown was for the Senate (one half of Congress) to pass a bill to fund the government. During the first 40 days of the closure, Democrats in the Senate rejected a Republican version of the bill 14 times because it did not include funding to extend health-care subsidies (benefits). Without the subsidies, health-care costs for more than 20 million Americans will significantly increase.

On November 10, eight senators who typically vote with Democrats voted with Republicans to pass the bill because, they said, the shutdown was harming Americans. In a 60–40 vote, a bill to fund the government through late January was passed. It did not extend the health-care subsidies but did include increased funding for medical care for veterans. It also ensured that SNAP recipients will receive benefits through September 2026. The bill then went to the House of Representatives (the other half of Congress), where it passed with a vote of 222–209 on November 12. President Donald Trump, a Republican, signed it into law that night.

How did the government reopen?

SNAP funds were restored within hours of the reopening. Federal employees began returning to work on November 13. Federal law requires the government to fully pay workers for the time they missed during the shutdown. The White House said most federal workers would receive back pay by November 19. Flight restrictions were fully lifted on November 17. Cultural institutions run by the government also reopened, including all 21 of the Smithsonian Institution's museums and the National Zoo.

How did people react?

Trump said, "We're opening up our country. It should have never been closed." Democrats who voted for the bill said that even though health-care funding was not in it, they had succeeded in bringing the issue to people's attention. "What happened over the last 40 days is we crystallized the fight about health care for the American people," said Senator Jeanne Shaheen. But other Democrats were angry that their colleagues gave in. "It is important for Democrats to have a backbone and really fight for the American people," said Representative Ilhan Omar.

What will happen next?

As part of the compromise with Democrats who voted for the bill, Republicans promised to hold a separate vote on health-care funding in December. Political experts said such legislation is unlikely to pass in Congress or be signed by Trump. Because the bill that reopened the government is in effect only through January 2026, Congress will have to agree on a longer-term budget or face the possibility of another shutdown early next year.

ON THE COVER: ANNA-MARIE KELLEN/METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA; BANDAI NAMCO; U.S. MINT; GETTY IMAGES (2)

Reusable rocket returns to Earth

On November 13, Blue Origin became the second private space company to successfully recover a reusable rocket. The rocket, called New Glenn, launched two spacecraft for NASA's ESCAPADE mission, which aims to put humans on Mars. SpaceX became the first company to recover a rocket in 2015 and has done it nearly 600 times since then.

New Glenn is named after NASA astronaut John Glenn, the first American to orbit Earth. It stands 321.5 feet high and is built to make 25 trips. Rockets, which cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build, were traditionally used once and then discarded. A reusable rocket saves money, reduces waste, and lowers the cost of space travel.

About nine minutes after New Glenn launched, it returned to Earth and landed upright on a ship in the Atlantic Ocean. This was Blue Origin's second attempt to recover New Glenn, after its first mission failed in January. ESCAPADE's spacecraft will reach Mars' orbit by September 2027 and spend 11 months collecting data about the planet.

New Glenn lifting off

FUN FACT
When colorful light appears in the sky near the South Pole, it's called the southern lights or aurora australis.

The aurora borealis in the sky over Wisconsin on November 11

Vivid northern lights seen

People across the US were able to see a rare, widespread display of the northern lights on November 11 and 12. The natural phenomenon was the result of unusual space activity.

The northern lights, also known as aurora borealis, appear when strong winds from the Sun carry electric particles toward Earth. When the particles reach Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere, they create green, red, blue, and purple light. In this case, the strong solar winds were caused by multiple blasts of energy from the Sun, called coronal mass ejections (CMEs). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said these CMEs were much stronger than usual.

In North America, the northern lights are usually visible only in Alaska and northern Canada. In Europe, they can typically be seen from Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Finland. The strong CMEs made the lights visible in US states as far south as Alabama, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, and Florida, as well as in southern Canada and northern regions of the UK.

People across the US stepped outside to witness and photograph the rare sight. "It was the brightest, most vivid red I have seen," said Matt Haynie, who saw the lights in northern California. DeJuan Shorter, who viewed them with his daughters in Chicago, Illinois, said the sight was intense. "The green was really popping over the water," he said.

More northern lights may appear in the coming weeks, but experts usually can't predict them more than a few days or hours in advance.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

WELCOMING A BABY

A southern white rhino was born at Bioparc Valencia in Spain. Zookeepers said the "lively" male calf runs around and brings "immense joy." His birth is part of an international conservation effort for the endangered species.

The calf and his mom

Bob Ross

A JOYFUL SALE

Three paintings by artist Bob Ross sold for more than $600,000. The money will support public television, which aired Ross's hit show *The Joy of Painting* from 1983 to 1994. Ross, who died in 1995, was a beloved pop culture figure known for his calm voice, positivity, and kind demeanor.

AN ONGOING TRADITION

In 2016, Wanda Dench sent a text to a wrong number and mistakenly invited a stranger to Thanksgiving dinner. Jamal Hinton, then age 16, got the message and jokingly asked if he should come anyway. She said yes, he showed up—and this year they'll spend their 10th holiday together. "We're more a family now," he said.

Jamal Hinton and Wanda Dench

GETTY IMAGES (2); BIOPARC VALENCIA; COURTESY OF BONHAMS; BOB ROSS INC.; INSTAGRAM/JAMAL HINTON/WANDA DENCH; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

DID YOU KNOW?
The last time the US Mint stopped producing a coin was in 1857, when it retired one worth half a cent.

US pennies feature President Abraham Lincoln.

First Treasury leader

Alexander Hamilton (above) was the first secretary of the US Treasury, serving under President George Washington from 1789 to 1795. As secretary, Hamilton created the first national bank, paid off the debt the US had taken on during the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), and proposed the plan to establish the US Mint.

Nation bids farewell to the penny

The US Mint, which creates America's coins, had made its final batch of pennies, ending 232 years of production of the one-cent coin.

What happened?

On November 12, a ceremony to retire the penny was held at the Philadelphia Mint in Pennsylvania, one of four US locations where coins are made. Brandon Beach, head of the US Treasury, hit the button to strike the final penny. The coins minted at the ceremony will be auctioned off for collectors.

Why was the penny retired?

The Treasury, which oversees the US Mint, had announced in May that it would stop producing new pennies once it ran out of the blank sheets of metal the coins are made from. President Donald Trump had previously called for an end to penny production. He had support from lawmakers from both major parties (Democrat and Republican), who agreed that the penny was wasteful. It costs the US Mint nearly four cents to make and distribute each one-cent coin. Many people also leave pennies at home, where they are not part of the US economy, because their value is too low to be useful. The decision could result in a savings of $56 million a year for the federal government.

How did people react?

"It's an emotional day," said Clayton Crotty, who has worked at the Mint for 15 years. Many news outlets memorialized the penny's value in American culture. In *USA Today*, reporter Mike Snider wrote that popular phrases such as "A penny for your thoughts" and "Worth every penny" may be lost in the future. Some retail industry representatives criticized the government for not providing clear guidelines on how businesses should operate without pennies.

What will happen next?

About 300 billion pennies remain in circulation and can be used as legal money. But many businesses have reported that they are already running low on the coins. Some are asking customers to use exact change when paying with cash, while others are rounding prices of their goods up or down in increments of five cents. Items purchased digitally or by credit or debit card can continue to be sold at the exact price.

WORD OF THE WEEK

MAGAZINE

The first "magazines" were spaces used for storage. The root of the word is the Arabic *maḵzan* ("storehouse"). The word entered English via Italian, with the word *magazzino* meaning "warehouse." During the 17th century, "magazine" began to be used for books and other publications because they were considered "storehouses" of information.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

November 23, 1936
First issue of *Life* magazine published

On November 23, 1936, *Life* magazine began under Henry Luce, who had founded *Time* in 1923. *Life* had been a humor title in the 1880s, but Luce reimagined it to consist mostly of photographs that allowed readers "to see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events... and be amazed." At its peak, *Life* had 8 million subscribers. It published weekly until 1972 and ceased publication in 2007.

The first issue

Bad Bunny

Latin Grammys are awarded

The 26th annual Latin Grammy Awards were presented on November 13 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Singer Maluma and actress Roselyn Sánchez were the evening's hosts. Bad Bunny took home five awards, including Album of the Year. He tied with the Argentinian duo Ca7riel & Paco Amoroso for the most wins. "I want to dedicate this award to all the children and youth of Latin America, especially in Puerto Rico," Bad Bunny said in an acceptance speech.

LA Olympics changes schedule

At the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, the women's 100-meter track final will begin the opening night of medal competition instead of the men's for the first time. The schedule change demonstrates "in a really powerful way" LA28's commitment to equality for women, said World Athletics President Sebastian Coe. The Los Angeles Olympics will begin in July 2028.

Winning band members

Indiana band takes top prize

On November 15, Indiana's Avon High School won the Bands of America Grand National Championship for the third year in a row. More than 100 high school bands from at least 20 states competed at the event in Indianapolis. Texas' Flower Mound High School took second place, and Indiana's Carmel High School came in third. The bands are judged on music, marching technique, and other criteria.

PERSONAL CONNECTION
Jane Goodall gave the chimpanzees she studied names to show that they were individuals.

Jane Goodall in about 1995

Jane Goodall remembered at US service

A memorial service for world-renowned conservationist Jane Goodall was held on November 12 at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The event drew hundreds of people and featured speakers who paid tribute to Goodall's life and work.

Goodall was born in 1934 in London, England, and died on October 1 at age 91. She became known in the 1960s for her research on chimpanzees in Tanzania. Her discoveries, such as how chimpanzees make and use tools, changed the way scientists understood animal behavior. She later founded the Jane Goodall Institute and its global Roots & Shoots youth program.

Although Goodall was British, a service was held in the US because of her worldwide influence and her close ties to American scientific and conservation groups. In January, she had been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, for her efforts to protect the environment.

The memorial began with a procession at the cathedral's entrance, where about 20 rescue dogs stood as honor guards and offered comfort to mourners. Dogs had been Goodall's favorite animal because of the unconditional love they offer. The service opened with a choir performance and a recording of Goodall speaking about nature.

Speakers included actor Leonardo DiCaprio, an environmental activist and friend. In his speech, he called Goodall "an extraordinary woman who changed not only the world but so many of us in it." Goodall's grandson, Merlin van Lawick, shared personal stories. "We promise to carry forth your light," he said. "The seeds of hope you have planted have taken root in millions."

Rescue dogs at the cathedral's entrance

Anna Rathmann, executive director of the Jane Goodall Institute USA, also spoke at the service. She urged those in attendance to carry on Goodall's mission and shared one of her guiding principles: "Together we can, together we will, and together we must change the world."

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Tahoe black bear makes self at home on holiday ice rink" *SFist*

GETTY IMAGES (4); LA2028; MICHELLE PEMBERTON/INDYSTAR/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION

Around the world

The sheep

Nuremberg, Germany
Sheep pass through city

Hundreds of sheep flocked through Nuremberg on November 16 on their way to their winter home. The 600 sheep travel more than six miles every year as part of an ancient tradition. In summer, the animals graze in nearby meadows to help keep the grass short. As winter approaches, people line the streets to watch the sheep being herded through the central market square to new pastures west of the city.

The parade

Bamako, Mali
Puppet festival takes place

Giant puppets filled the city of Bamako recently for the annual three-day marionette festival. Marionettes (puppets controlled by strings) are important in Malian culture, where they have traditionally been used to tell stories. The event featured dancing, concerts, and plays, as well as a parade of more than 200 puppets. The colorful designs included larger-than-life people, lions, hyenas, and horses.

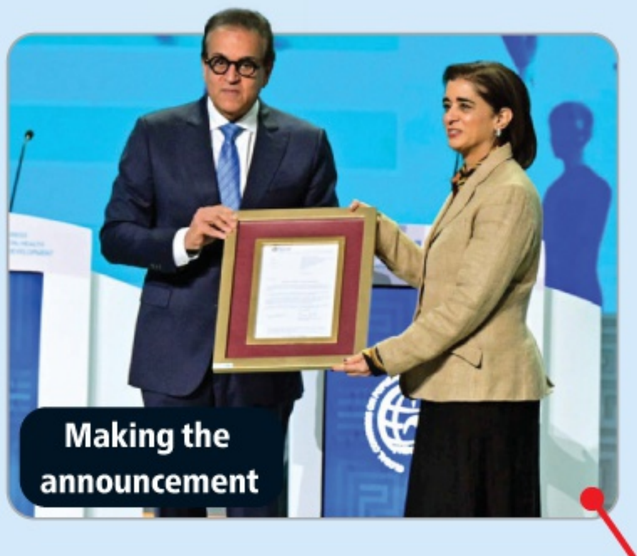
The march

Belém, Brazil
Protesters demand climate action

On November 15, tens of thousands of people marched in the streets of Belém, where COP30, the United Nations' climate conference, was underway. At the "Great People's March," demonstrators sang songs and carried sculptures and banners, demanding that world leaders do more to reduce the use of fossil fuels and protect natural places like the Amazon rainforest.

Egypt
Eye disease eliminated

The World Health Organization announced that Egypt has eliminated trachoma, an eye disease caused by bacteria that can lead to blindness. Egypt's strategies to beat the disease included treatment with medication, surgery for those with severe infections, and promoting facial cleanliness so people wouldn't pass the bacteria to others.


Making the announcement

Luanda, Angola
Anniversary match

As Angola celebrated 50 years of independence from Portugal, the African nation hosted Argentina's soccer team, the reigning World Cup winners, for a friendly match. It was held in the November 11 stadium, which was named after Angola's independence day. Before taking the field, superstar Lionel Messi (who plays for Argentina's national team as well as Inter Miami in the US) gave autographed jerseys to Angola's president and first lady.

President João Lourenço (left) with Lionel Messi

AP; LEROY MILLER/FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA; GETTY IMAGES (2); ALAMY (2); EMRO COMMUNICATIONS; SHUTTERSTOCK (3)

Around the world

Paniz Faryousefi

Tehran, Iran
First female conductor

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra has appointed its first-ever female conductor, Paniz Faryousefi. Under Iran's current laws, women don't have as many rights as men. For example, they have to dress a certain way and are not allowed to hold certain jobs. "I hope this marks a new era for young Iranian women," Faryousefi said.

Children doing exercises

China
Plans to boost students' mental health

The Chinese government has announced new measures to improve children's mental health. Elementary and secondary school students will now be required to take part in at least two hours of physical exercise every day. Homework will be limited, recess will be extended, and mobile phones will be banned from classrooms. Authorities hope the initiative will help reduce stress and anxiety among young people.

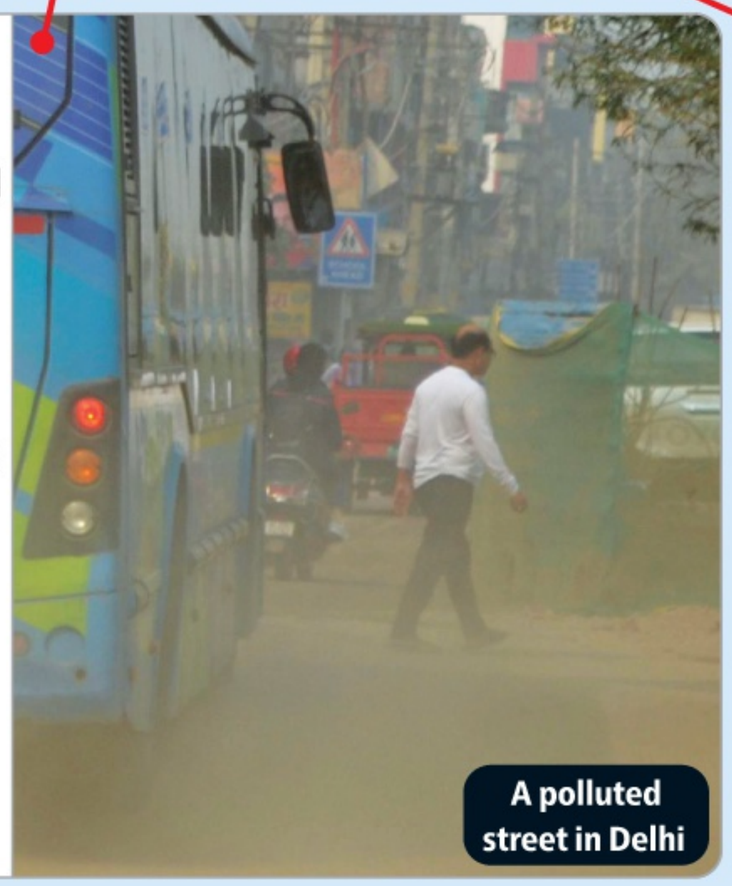
French runner Paméra Losange

Tokyo, Japan
Deaflympics begin

The 25th Summer Deaflympics, a major international sports competition for deaf athletes, began on November 15 in Tokyo. First held in Paris in 1924, the Deaflympics are the world's longest-running multi-sport event for athletes with a disability. During 12 days of the Games this year, more than 3,000 athletes from 81 countries will compete in 21 sports, including swimming, wrestling, bowling, and track and field.

Delhi, India
Pollution alert

On November 11, authorities asked elementary schools in Delhi to teach lessons online so students could stay home. The air quality was so poor that doctors were advising children and the elderly to avoid going outdoors. Unhealthy air is a frequent problem in Delhi due to pollution from vehicles and factories. It often worsens during winter, when fields near the city are burned to prepare land for planting food crops.


A polluted street in Delhi

Signing the treaty

Victoria, Australia
Historic agreement signed

The state of Victoria signed a treaty with Aboriginal people, who were Australia's first known inhabitants. The agreement acknowledged the harm caused when Europeans arrived and took control of the land. It also created a First Peoples' Assembly, which will have a say in policies that affect Aboriginal people. This is the first such agreement ever made in the country.

Should we stop using wrapping paper?

Some people say it's too much waste, while others like the tradition.

What you need to know

- The practice of wrapping gifts dates back to 2nd-century China.
- Modern wrapping paper was introduced in the US in 1917.
- Americans spend about $2.6 billion on gift wrap every year.
- Most wrapping paper and tissue paper has a plastic coating that prevents it from being recycled.
- In the US, an estimated 2.3 million pounds of wrapping paper ends up in landfills every year.

RICH HISTORY
In Japan, the tradition of wrapping gifts in luxurious silk cloth, called *fukusa*, dates back to the 1600s.

It's so fun to buy a present for a friend or loved one, wrap it up in colorful paper, and enjoy the look of anticipation on their face when they open it. And when you receive a gift, part of the pleasure is ripping off the wrapping paper to reveal what's inside. It's a special moment that adds a little extra excitement to birthday or holiday gifts. But many people worry about the amount of wrapping paper that ends up in landfills. They say there are plenty of other environmentally friendly alternatives—or they choose not to wrap presents at all. What do you think? Should we stop using wrapping paper?

Yes—it's much too wasteful

So much wrapping paper can't be recycled and doesn't break down naturally. It just ends up in landfills, where it releases harmful gases that contribute to climate change. Some wrapping paper also has glitter or a glossy coating, which becomes plastic pollution. For the giver, wrapping presents means spending extra time, effort, and money on something that ends up in the trash anyway. And if you're giving multiple gifts at once, that really adds up. It's much better to offer a present in something that can be reused, like a box, basket, or piece of fabric. These alternatives are also a fun way to make your gift stand out!

No—it's fun and festive

Unwrapping a present is part of the magic of receiving a gift. It builds anticipation, giving you time to guess what the gift might be. That's extra fun when you think it could be a present you've been hoping for. Wrapping gifts in pretty paper is a tradition that has been around for more than 100 years in the US. Traditions like these are passed down from parents and grandparents to kids—that's meaningful. And for the gift giver, wrapping a present shows they care. They spend time making it look beautiful and might even tailor the wrapping to the recipient's interests, which makes the person feel even more special.

YES Three reasons we should stop using wrapping paper

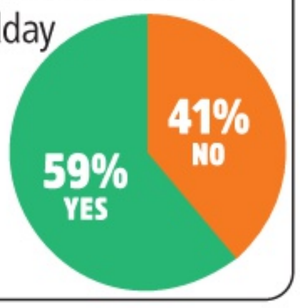
1. **Wrapping paper creates pollution and waste that lasts for years. It can't always be recycled and doesn't break down.**
2. **Wrapping presents can be time-consuming, expensive, and stressful.**
3. **There are so many other creative ways to give presents, like putting them in boxes, baskets, or fabric.**

NO Three reasons we should not stop using wrapping paper

1. **Wrapping presents adds to the anticipation of opening the gift. Untying a piece of cloth isn't the same.**
2. **Traditions like gift-wrapping are passed down in families, making them important and meaningful.**
3. **Choosing special paper and making a gift look nice shows you care.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if naps should be allowed at school. More than half of you voted in favor of a midday snooze: 59% of you said yes, while 41% said no.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think we should stop using wrapping paper or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Putting on a parade

As the top executive at Macy's Studios, Carolynn Kolinsky oversees the organization of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. She spoke to *The Week Junior* about producing the world's largest parade, now celebrating its 99th year.

How would you describe your job?
From the balloons to the performers, I make sure everything comes together on time.

What goes into creating the Thanksgiving Day Parade?
We work on it all year long at a studio in New Jersey. The team involves about 50 painters, carpenters, sculptors, and engineers. We start with sketches of floats, then build 3D-printed models, and the balloons are hand-painted. Every float is made so it can fold down to fit through the Lincoln Tunnel into New York City and then be reassembled at the top of the parade route.

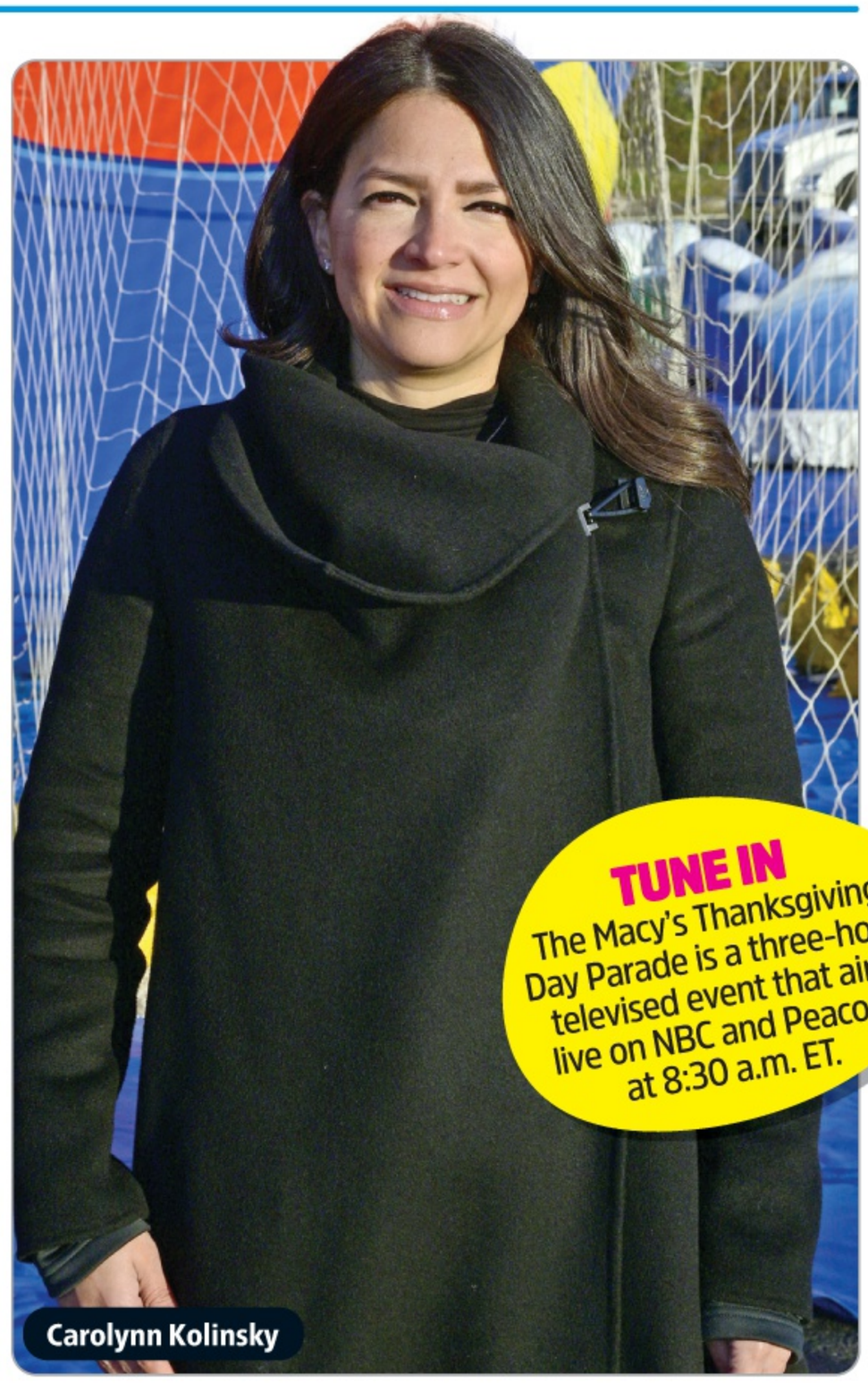
The new Derpy Tiger balloon

Did you watch the parade as a child?
I did! Now it's even more special because I get to help bring the parade to life. My whole family is involved—my niece, nephews, sister, husband, and kids have all been part of it or cheered from the stands.

Any favorite floats or balloons?
I love Snoopy and the Sesame Street float. I also love Macy's Tom Turkey, who leads the parade, and Santa really brings in the holiday season and cheer.

What's new this year?
We've got new balloons of Derpy Tiger and Sussie from *KPop Demon Hunters*. New floats include a *Stranger Things*–themed "Upside-Down Invasion" with a performance by the rock band Foreigner.

Why is it such a beloved event?
The parade started in 1924, created by Macy's staff as a gift to America. It gives families of all generations something to enjoy together—not only in New York City but in homes across the country.


Carolynn Kolinsky

TUNE IN
The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is a three-hour televised event that airs live on NBC and Peacock at 8:30 a.m. ET.

Science prize for teen

Kevin Tang has won the 2025 3M Young Scientist Challenge, a national science contest for middle school students with a $25,000 cash prize. The eighth grader from California created FallGuard, a device that uses video analysis to alert loved ones if an older adult falls. It can also detect irregular walking patterns that may signal a stroke. Tang got the idea after his grandmother fell in their kitchen and hopes his invention will protect people like her. "Small ideas can lead to big changes if you care enough to build them," he said in his entry.

Kevin Tang

Sonia Raman

A trailblazer in sports

Sonia Raman is making history as the first head coach of Indian descent in the WNBA, leading the Seattle Storm. She was an assistant coach with the New York Liberty last season and previously became the first Indian American woman to serve as an NBA assistant coach during her four seasons with the Memphis Grizzlies. Before that, she led the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) women's basketball team for 12 seasons. Raman said her goal is to make the Seattle Storm the best team it can be, and she hopes her journey "opens doors for this next generation."

OVERHEARD

"It's about your resilience and your courage."
Back to the Future star Michael J. Fox on managing life's challenges

COURTESY OF MACY'S (2); 3M/DISCOVERY EDUCATION; GETTY IMAGES (2)

BETTER TOGETHER
One term used for a group of flamingos is a "flamboyance."

An American flamingo

More birds benefiting

Restoration work in Florida Bay and Everglades National Park has made the water more suitable for many birds, including white ibis (below), wood storks, and roseate spoonbills. More than 100,000 pairs of water birds nested in the Everglades in two recent years—the most seen since the 1940s.

Flamingos in Florida inspire hope

Although flamingo imagery is common in Florida, the species has been largely absent from the state for 100 years. Now new sightings of the birds have led researchers to believe they may be returning to Florida for good.

Scientific evidence suggests that flamingos are native to Florida. However, the flamingo population in Florida declined drastically in the late 1800s due to hunting. Flamingos and other bird species were given more legal protections in the 1900s, but by 1956, there were only about 43,000 adults remaining from an initial population of 168,000. The flamingos were nesting in four places, a decrease from 29 locations in the past.

Peaches, one of the flamingos blown by a hurricane

Flamingos struggled to reestablish a home in Florida because of the high salt concentration in the water from years of human construction and farming. Since the 2000s, people have worked to improve the quality of the water in Florida Bay and Everglades National Park to make it more suitable for wildlife. For example, conservationists have fought to build bridges to improve the water's flow and reservoirs to filter out pollution.

In August 2023, a flock of 300 to 400 flamingos was blown off course between southeast Mexico and Cuba due to strong winds from Hurricane Idalia. The flamingos ended up all around the eastern United States, including in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida. While flamingos have been previously documented making brief stops in Florida after storms, researchers hoped that improved water conditions in Florida might result in more individuals staying.

Six months after Hurricane Idalia, researchers discovered that at least 100 flamingos were still living in the state. In July 2025, about 125 of the birds were photographed in Florida Bay. Their continued presence in Florida may mean that they are reestablishing a home there.

To confirm whether flamingos are remaining in Florida year-round, researchers are making efforts to monitor them. Jerome Lorenz from Florida International University uses GPS trackers placed on the birds' legs to track their movements. Lorenz said the flamingos' return to Florida is "evidence that [restoration] efforts are on the right track."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Snow Canyon State Park, Utah

Created in 1959, Snow Canyon State Park is known for its scenic red rock sandstone cliffs, dunes, and lava flows. Its unusual features include petrified sand dunes, which turned to stone over millions of years, and ancient petroglyphs (images carved into rock). The park makes up part of the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, which was established to protect the desert tortoise, a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Coyotes, roadrunners, jackrabbits, peregrine falcons, and large lizards known as Gila monsters may also be seen along the trails.

A jackrabbit

Animals and the environment

HEALTHY APPETITES
Asian elephants can eat up to 300 pounds of food per day.

Asian elephants

Helping farmers and elephants coexist

A new project in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, aims to improve relations between farmers and endangered Asian elephants. As land along the elephants' migration routes has been turned into farmland and water in the area has become more scarce, the animals have begun searching for food and water on farms. This has raised the risk of conflict between humans and elephants.

ZSL, the organization that runs London Zoo and Whipsnade Zoo in England, is now working with an organization in Thailand to try a new approach. Instead of growing crops such as bananas and sugarcane, which elephants love, farmers will be encouraged to grow coffee beans, which elephants don't like as much. Coffee can also be grown alongside chili peppers and marigold flowers, which elephants tend to avoid. Beehives could also be used to keep elephants away.

Training in coffee growing has already begun for more than 40 farmers. Wildlife will be closely monitored so the researchers will know how the project is affecting elephants. The team will also look at how coffee plants can help other animals that live in the forests, including bats and birds.

Animal of the week: Asian small-clawed otter

For the first time ever, three Asian small-clawed otter pups were born at the Virginia Zoo. Their mom Elbe and dad Jilin are part of a breeding program to boost the population of the world's smallest otter species.

- **LIFESPAN:** Up to 12 years in captivity
- **HABITAT:** Streams, rivers, and marshes in Asia
- **SIZE:** 10 to 15 inches long, less than 10 pounds
- **DIET:** Crustaceans, mollusks, fish, insects, reptiles
- **FUN FACT:** In zoos, these otters are often seen "juggling" small rocks between their front paws.

Good week / Bad week

Numbats

Experts spotted baby numbats, called numbubs, at two wildlife sanctuaries in southwestern Australia. These seven babies are a hopeful sign for the marsupial species, which is endangered in the wild.

Clownfish and anemones

According to experts, an entire population of anemones in the Red Sea have been turning white and dying off as a result of a 2023 marine heat wave. The heat also killed most of the area's clownfish, which live inside anemones.

Ask an expert: "Why do cats knead?"

Avery, 9, Connecticut

Jonathan Losos
Professor of biology, Washington University in St. Louis

Ever had a cat stand on you and rhythmically push down one front paw then the other? Kneading, or "making biscuits," is something kittens (and lion and tiger cubs) do while nursing, probably to stimulate milk flow from their mother. Adult cats may do it to deepen their bond with humans.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Washington University in St. Louis at washu.edu.

GETTY IMAGES (5); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4); KARA DURDA/AUDUBON FLORIDA

A scrumptious symbol

A cake is much more than flour, sugar, eggs, and butter.

With their endless variety of shapes, designs, fillings, and flavors, cakes bring people together and make any occasion special.

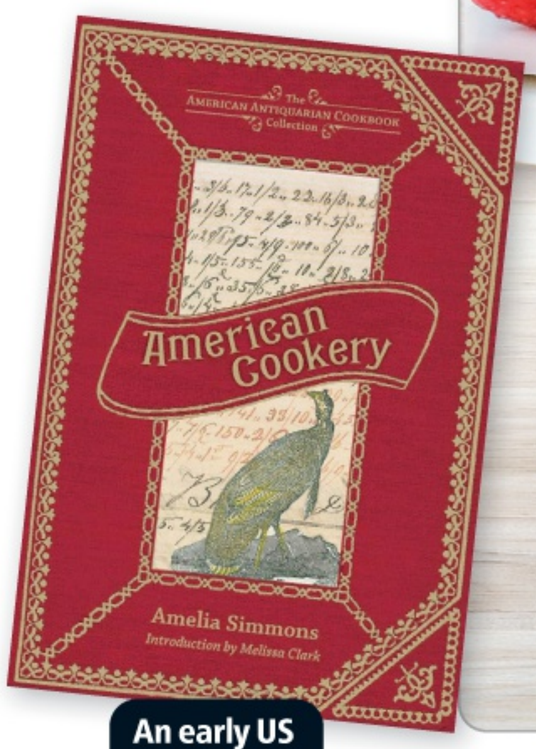
A 17th-century cake

Dense delights

The word "cake" entered the English language in the 13th century, derived from an Old Norse word that referred to small portions of cooked dough. These cakes were often dense and sweetened with honey. By the 1500s, sugar was more widely available in Europe, and cakes became sweeter confections. Cakes made with sugar and imported spices were expensive to make, however, and nobles used them to show their wealth and status. One of the earliest known recipes for icing, published in 1655, called for glazing cake with a mixture of egg whites, sugar, and rosewater.

Cakes in the US

Native Americans baked maize cakes —also known as "appone" —using ground corn, salt, and water. In the 17th and 18th centuries, European settlers brought their versions of cakes to the New World. They incorporated locally grown nuts, like black walnuts and pecans, which had been regarded as luxury items in Europe. The first US cookbook to feature cake recipes was Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery*, published in 1796. It included British-inspired recipes for pound cake and "election cake," a large celebratory cake made to serve crowds on Election Day. By the late 18th century, new American cakes emerged. Known as cider cakes, they were made with inexpensive apple cider.



An early US cookbook

TALL ORDER

The record for the most layers in a cake is 260, achieved by a baking ingredients company in Minnesota in 2018.

Cakes around the world

Different countries have their own cake traditions, such as the three shown at right. Which one would you choose? Which cakes would you add?

England

The name of this dessert, plum pudding (left), may seem misleading. It's not a pudding and doesn't contain plums. Rather, it's a dense steamed cake packed with dried fruits, nuts, and spices, traditionally served warm at the end of the Christmas meal in the UK.

SHUTTERSTOCK (5); SANDRA FAUCONNIER VIA WIKIMEDIA; BETTY CROCKER; GETTY IMAGES (3); ALAMY

# of celebration

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
By the 1700s, German children celebrated birthdays with cakes topped with candles—one for each year of life, plus one for good luck.

NET WT. 14½ OZS.
Betty Crocker
TRADE MARK
GingerCake
Just add water, mix, bake
Made with SOFTASILK Cake Flour
INGREDIENTS: FLOUR, SUGAR, MOLASSES, VEGETABLE SHORTENING, NON-FAT DRY MILK SOLIDS, PHOSPHATE BAKING POWDER, SPICE FLAVORINGS, SALT, AND CARAMEL.
MANUFACTURED BY General Mills, Inc.
General Offices, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Rising in popularity

The introduction of baking powder in the 19th century made cakes lighter, fluffier, and easier to layer. Also around this time, advances in oven technology allowed cakes to be mass-produced. The first boxed cake mix—a gingerbread mix—was introduced in 1933. Later in that decade, Duncan Hines and Betty Crocker (see photo above) followed with pre-measured mixes, which helped home cooks create cakes with minimal cost and effort. During World War II (1939–1945), ingredient shortages led bakers to adapt recipes and use alternative sweeteners, like carrots. In the 1970s, ice cream cakes became popular due in part to television advertising. In 1989, Pillsbury introduced Funfetti, a white cake batter with rainbow sprinkles mixed in. A new trend began in 2008, when a blog post about cake pops went viral.

A king cake

Cakes around the country

Many US cities and states have signature cakes. For example, Baked Alaska was reportedly invented in New York City and named to celebrate the US acquisition of Alaska in 1867. To make it, sponge cake is topped with ice cream and meringue, then browned with a blowtorch. Smith Island cake, which dates to the 1800s and is Maryland's official state dessert, features up to 10 layers of yellow cake and chocolate frosting. King cake was introduced by French settlers to New Orleans, Louisiana, in the 1870s. Traditionally an oval-shaped ring cake made of cinnamon dough and colorful sugar or icing, it has a surprise trinket inside. California citrus chiffon cake, created in the 1920s, features the flavors of the state's lemons or oranges. A favorite cake flavor in the US is chocolate. For a recipe, see page 25.

China

Enjoyed during the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, mooncakes (left) are rich and dense, with a thick, baked crust and a sweet paste filling often made from lotus seeds or red beans. The mooncake gets it name for its round shape that resembles a full moon and also symbolizes unity.

Sweden

The princess cake (left) is a classic Swedish treat made with layers of sponge cake, raspberry jam, and pastry cream. It's topped with a dome of whipped cream and covered with marzipan (almond paste), usually green. Princess cake is often served for birthdays and other special events.

WATCH OUT!
The stegosaurus had a large, heavy tail with sharp spikes that it swung from side to side to defend itself.

Jason Cooper (center) and his team take the dinosaur apart.

Colorado's state fossil

A rendering of a stegosaurus

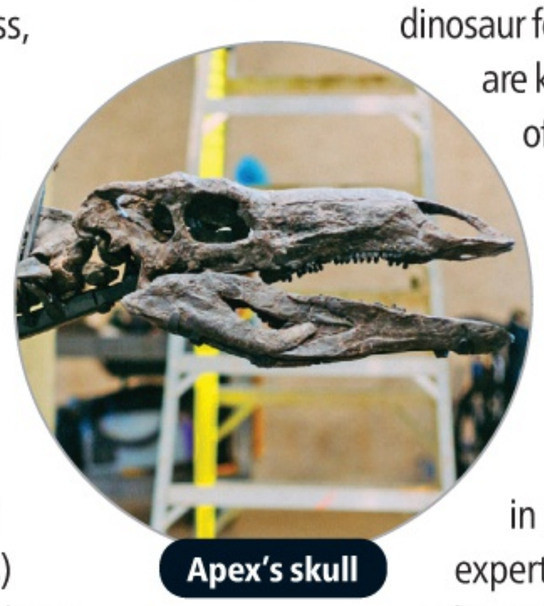
Colorado has a strong connection to the stegosaurus—in fact, it's the official state fossil. The first stegosaurus fossil ever found was uncovered in Morrison, Colorado, in 1877, by a professor and naturalist named Arthur Lakes. At the time, people were very excited about finding dinosaur bones. They moved to Colorado to "hunt" for them, in a period known as the "great dinosaur rush."

Although the stegosaurus isn't the most common dinosaur found in the area, its plates and spikes make it very recognizable. A fourth grade class at McElwain Elementary School in Thornton, Colorado, thought it was so important that they wanted it to be the state fossil. Students wrote letters and presented their case to Colorado leaders, and on April 28, 1982, the Colorado governor made it official.

Moving a massive stegosaurus

The largest and most complete stegosaurus fossil ever found was dismantled, moved, and put back together at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City. During the carefully coordinated process, scientists documented each fossilized piece of the dinosaur, which is named Apex, for use in future research.

Apex, an armored, plant-eating dinosaur that lived about 161 million years ago, was discovered in 2022 when a paleontologist (scientist who studies the past through fossils) named Jason Cooper noticed a bone jutting out of a rock on his property in Colorado. Cooper eventually uncovered 254 of Apex's bones, which is about 80% of its full skeleton. Missing bones were filled in with 3D-printed and sculpted pieces, and the 11-foot-tall, 27-foot-long creature was mounted on an armature (metal frame) for display.



Apex's skull

Apex was sold in 2024 to a private collector for $44.6 million—the highest price ever paid for a dinosaur fossil. When rare specimens like this are kept in private collections, they are often unavailable for scientific study or public view. But the person who bought Apex, a business executive named Kenneth Griffin, loaned the dinosaur to AMNH so it could be studied and seen.

AMNH put Apex on display in December 2024, but museum experts didn't have time to prepare educational information to accompany the exhibit. Paleontologists also did not have time to study the individual fossil pieces.

This fall, AMNH officials decided to move Apex closer to other famous fossils in their collection, including Tyrannosaurus rex and triceratops. They also saw an opportunity for scientists to gain access to the fossils during the transition.

Cooper and two colleagues disassembled Apex from its armature and placed each piece into customized foam padding, inside handmade wooden crates, for safekeeping. Then, over the course of a month, experts used 3D technology and high-tech scans to capture detailed images of each bone.

Experts also took a small sample of Apex's 45-inch-long femur (thigh bone) and found annual growth marks inside it, like the rings inside a tree. This information gave scientists clues about how fast the stegosaurus grew and how long it lived. Because Apex is so large and the fossils show no signs of wounds, they think it lived a long life and died peacefully.

Apex is on display again until 2028. The data captured during its move are available to scientists all over the world, who can continue searching for more answers about these prehistoric beasts.

Creating gold jewelry out of e-waste

The Royal Mint, which is the official maker of all coins in the UK, has created a new line of wedding and engagement jewelry made from recycled electronics. The collection includes wedding bands, engagement rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. Each piece is made using 18-karat gold recovered from old smartphones and laptops.

Every year, millions of tons of electronic devices are thrown away. This is known as e-waste. Each discarded item can contain small amounts of precious metals, like gold. At the Royal Mint's Reformation Metals facility, a special process is used to extract precious metals from the circuit boards inside old gadgets.

Gold extracted by the Royal Mint

The wedding collection is part of the "886 by the Royal Mint" brand and includes two types of diamond rings. One type has natural diamonds that are mined from the ground, while the other uses lab-grown diamonds. These humanmade gems have the same structure as natural diamonds but cost much less.

Each piece of jewelry in the collection comes with a good luck charm made with silver that has been recovered from old x-rays. "By combining our 1,100-year heritage of precious metal expertise with cutting-edge technology, we're demonstrating how historic institutions can lead the way in sustainable innovation," said Anne Jessopp, head of the Royal Mint.

MAKING MONEY

In the year 880, the Royal Mint made its first coin, a silver penny featuring a leader named Alfred the Great.

Jewelry from the new collection that uses only reclaimed gold

One of the materials being tested

Special wetsuits could save lives

Lightweight materials used in bite-resistant wetsuits could help people survive shark bites, according to a new study by scientists in Australia. The materials included Kevlar (used in bulletproof vests) and thin fibers of polyethylene (used in sailboat ropes).

To test each material's toughness, scientists lured white sharks and tiger sharks with bait, then swapped the bait with "bite packages" made of wood covered in foam and one of the materials. Even when the sharks bit, thrashed, and dragged the packages underwater, the materials limited severe damage. The sharks left only small indentations with their teeth.

The researchers emphasized that wetsuits made with the materials do not eliminate all risk of injuries from sharks but could prevent severe wounds and blood loss. They said people should consider the wetsuits part of a shark safety "toolbox" that could also include electronic devices that deter sharks.

AMAZING INVENTION

A cassette tape that uses DNA

Scientists in China created a cassette tape that could store every song ever recorded using DNA (a chemical found in every living thing that contains all the information about how it should grow). DNA has been called "nature's hard drive" because it can store vast amounts of data.

The team printed synthetic (humanmade) DNA onto the tape and loaded data onto it. A 300-foot section of tape has the capacity to hold more than 3 billion songs. The scientists hope the technology could one day replace large data centers that use a lot of electricity.

THE ROYAL MINT (2); FLINDERS UNIVERSITY; JIANKAI LI/SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; ON LEFT PAGE: REDUX (2); GETTY IMAGES

Photos of the week

Night light
An annual festival in France features large-scale illuminated exhibits.

Looking ahead
This image of a junglefowl was taken in a national park in Sri Lanka.

Natural beauty
An aerial photograph captures the details of a salt lake in China.

GETTY IMAGES (5); QUSAI

Photos of the week

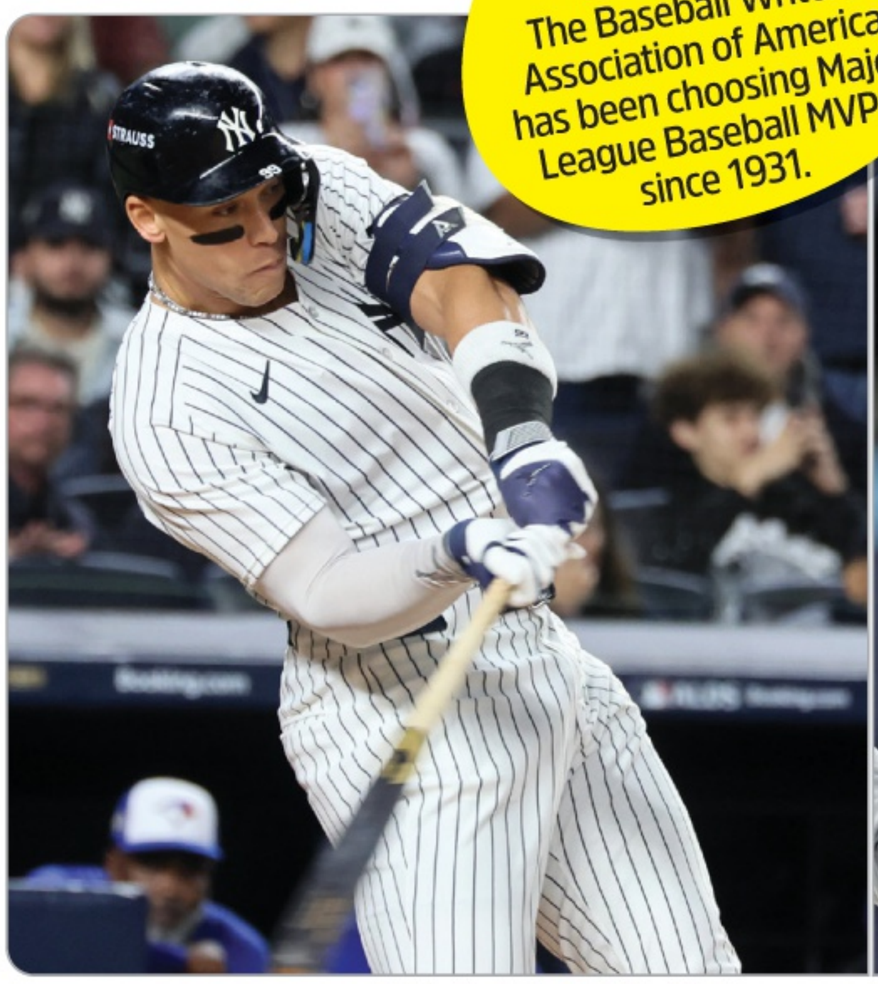
Special event
Participants prepare for a parade in India honoring the Sikh culture.

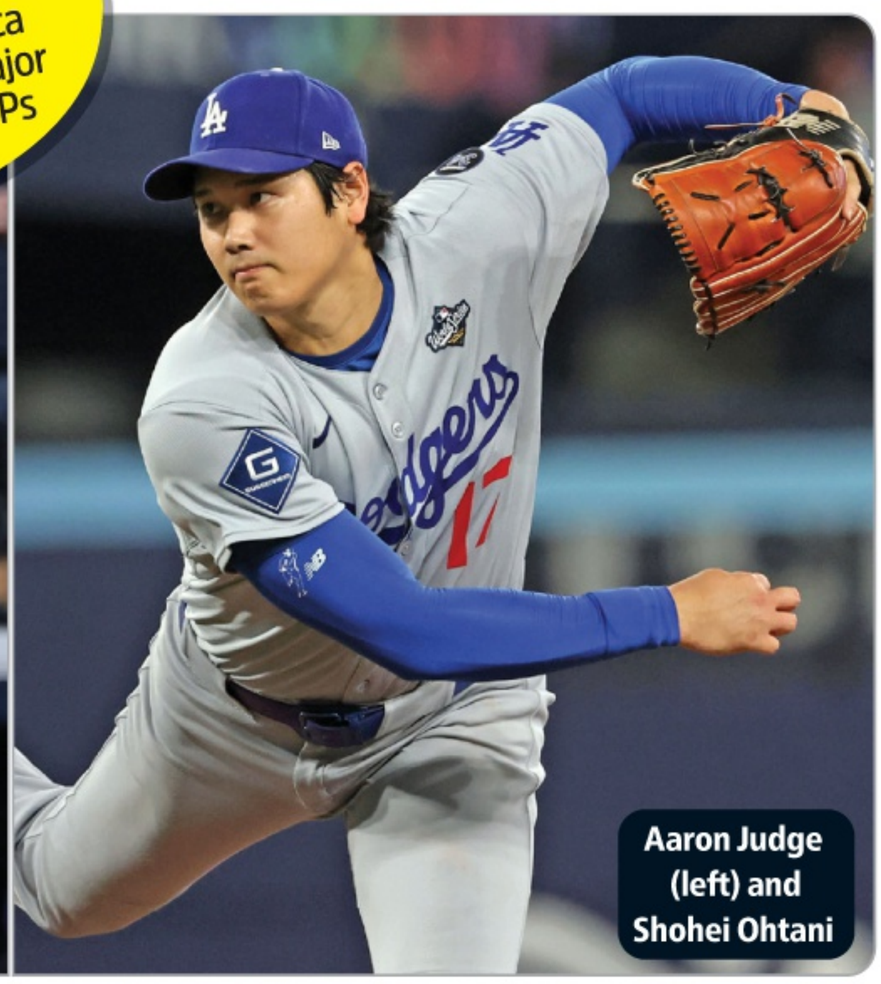
Vivid view
Visitors walk through a lush landscape of colorful flowers in China.

READER PHOTO

Bugging out
Qusai, 10, of Texas shot this image of a glider dragonfly.

VOTING HISTORY
The Baseball Writers' Association of America has been choosing Major League Baseball MVPs since 1931.





Aaron Judge (left) and Shohei Ohtani

Tournament update

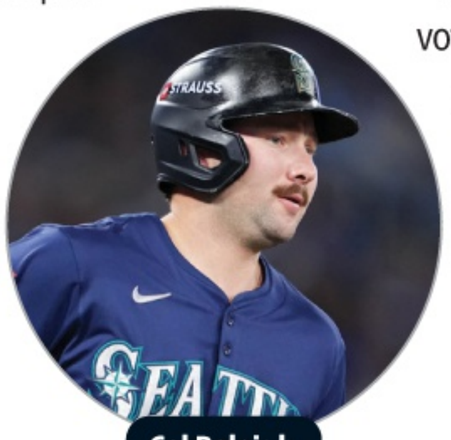
WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

The sixth World Baseball Classic, an international tournament taking place in March 2026, will feature teams from 20 countries. MLB stars who will play for Team USA include Pete Crow-Armstrong, Corbin Carroll, Aaron Judge, Paul Skenes, Cal Raleigh, and Bobby Witt Jr.

Ohtani and Judge named MVPs

Major League Baseball (MLB) announced the winners of its biggest awards of the season on November 13. For the first time ever, the MVPs (Most Valuable Players) were the same pair of superstars who had earned the honors the previous season. The National League (NL) MVP was Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Dodgers, and the American League (AL) MVP was Aaron Judge of the New York Yankees.

The MVP awards are decided by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, a group of journalists who cover the sport full-time. Two writers from each MLB city participate in the voting process, and both leagues have 30 voters. Every voter ranks players from first to 10th, and a player earns points for each spot on the ballot. The person with the highest total becomes MVP.



Cal Raleigh

This year, Ohtani was the unanimous (all voters in agreement) winner for the third consecutive season. He has been MVP four of the last five seasons, and he received every vote each time. No other MLB player has won the award unanimously more than once.

Ohtani is a rare player who pitches and hits. Even after surgery limited his pitching, he remained one of baseball's most dangerous hitters, leading the NL in key offensive categories such as runs scored and slugging percentage (number of bases per at-bat).

In the AL, first-place MVP votes were split between Judge and Seattle Mariners catcher Cal Raleigh. Judge received 17 and Raleigh had 13, allowing the Yankees right fielder to earn his third MVP award. He led all MLB players in batting average, slugging percentage, and on-base percentage. He also hit 53 home runs. Raleigh had 60 homers, the most of any player, and drove in an AL-leading 125 runs.

Other honorees included last year's NL Rookie of the Year, Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Paul Skenes, who won the NL's Cy Young Award for best pitcher. The AL's Cy Young winner for the second year in a row was Tarik Skubal of the Detroit Tigers. Rookie of the Year went to Athletics first baseman Nick Kurtz in the AL and Atlanta Braves catcher Drake Baldwin in the NL.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

In a major matchup on November 15, fifth-ranked University of Georgia hosted 10th-ranked University of Texas and beat them, 35–10. Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton threw for four touchdowns and ran for another in the win, while linebacker Chris Cole recorded seven tackles. The next day, when the newest national rankings were released, Georgia moved up to number four.

Alysa Liu

FIGURE SKATING

Alysa Liu of the US won the gold medal in women's singles at Skate America on November 16. It is one of six events in the Grand Prix of Figure Skating, a major competition in the sport.

TENNIS

On November 16, Italy's Jannik Sinner, who is ranked number two in the world, beat number one player Carlos Alcaraz of Spain to win the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Tour Finals for the second year in a row.

GREAT GRABS

In a game on November 12, Notre Dame basketball star Hannah Hildago had 16 steals, the most ever for any NCAA player, male or female.

The Grace College women's basketball team

Hoops team breaks scoring record

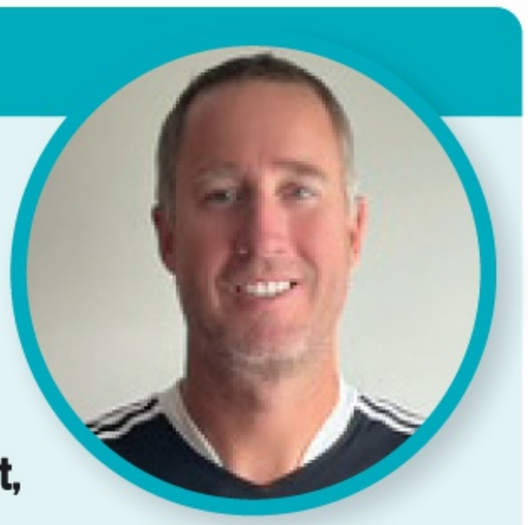
On November 11, a new scoring record was set in women's college basketball when Grace College racked up 172 points in a game against Ohio Christian University. Grace, located in Indiana, competes in a league that is part of the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), an association that oversees small colleges. However, the record covers the NAIA as well as the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association), the organization that oversees most college sports teams. The previous women's record, held by Grambling State University and Oklahoma Baptist University, was 159 points.

Grace uses a style of play known as the Grinnell system. It relies on constant, full-court pressure, frequent substitutions, and quick possessions. Head coach Dan Davis said that in each game, he wants his team to attempt more than 90 shots, including 40 to 45 three-pointers. He also wants his players to force at least 30 turnovers, grab 20 offensive rebounds, and take 20 more shots than their opponent.

Grace scored 93 points in the first half, and Ohio Christian scored 91 points in the whole game. Grace's high scorer, Maddy Poynter, had 34 points and made all 17 of her free-throw attempts. Four of her teammates scored at least 20 points. "This is something really cool for us to look back on and see that we really accomplished something special as a group," Davis said after the game.

Last year, Grace played Ohio Christian and beat them by a much closer score of 77–65. Grace also won the National Christian Colleges Athletic Association national championship in 2024.

COACH OF THE WEEK



Coach's Name: **Jeff Jager**

Sport: **Soccer**

"He constantly inspires me to give my best and work hard. He doesn't focus on wins or losses but on our effort and heart. He reminds us that if we keep putting in our best effort, the wins will come naturally. When we make mistakes, he patiently helps us learn and improve. I'm so grateful for his kindness, support, and dedication. He believes in us, pushes us, and genuinely cares about each of us. I truly couldn't ask for a better coach." Mahi, 11, Georgia

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com.* Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

These US athletes have qualified for or are hoping to qualify for the Winter Olympics or Paralympics in Italy next year. Here's what they told The Week Junior *about their sports.*

Steve Emt AGE: 55
SPORT: WHEELCHAIR CURLING

"Curling is like golf—you cannot beat it. You can't go on a golf course and hit 18 holes in one. It's impossible. Curling is the same way. You're not going to shoot 100%. That carrot of perfection is always in front of me. That's what I love. I need that drive."

Kendall Coyne Schofield
AGE: 33 SPORT: ICE HOCKEY

"The beauty about hockey is that we're in a team sport. Mistakes will happen, but we have teammates there to back us up. And what we do, we do together."

Oksana Masters AGE: 36
SPORT: PARA NORDIC SKIING

"My favorite thing about cross-country skiing is that you'll never see the same loop the same way twice because the snow changes so much. You have to adjust constantly."

Nick Goepper AGE: 31
SPORT: FREESKI

"What I love most about my sport is progression—learning new tricks, doing new things. If I did the same thing over and over again, I'd probably get really bored."

Lindsey Vonn AGE: 41
SPORT: ALPINE SKIING

"I love being on the mountain, having the wind in your face. There are no cell phones. You can't hear anyone. It's just you and the mountain. I think that's the best part about racing and about skiing in general."

MIKENZIE FRANK; GETTY IMAGES (4); MLB IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4); MLB

ANIMAL LOVERS
Ancient Egyptians considered cats sacred and believed they were magical creatures that brought good luck.

Coffins in *Divine Egypt*

Exhibition on Egyptian gods

A museum in New York City is showcasing artwork and objects that depict ancient deities.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York City has opened its first major Egyptian exhibition in 12 years. *Divine Egypt* brings together nearly 250 objects to explore how the people of ancient Egypt imagined and represented their gods and goddesses. It is on view until January 19, 2026.

The ancient Egyptian civilization developed along the Nile River more than 5,000 years ago. Most exhibitions on ancient Egyptian art focus on one period from the civilization's 3,000-year existence, but *Divine Egypt* has items from its entire history. There are thought to be more than 1,500 Egyptian deities, and they were often depicted as humans, animals, or a mix of both. The curators (organizers) of the show were Diana Craig Patch, who oversees Egyptian art at the Met, and research associate Brendan Hainline. They told *The Week Junior* that "there has never been an exhibition that takes such a broad look at images of the gods."

An Egyptian deity

The exhibition's galleries are organized by theme. One gallery is about the sun god Re and the deities that work with him. One of the highlights in that room is a 4,000-pound limestone sculpture of Re as a scarab beetle. Other themes covered include creation mythologies, the ways non-royal people connected with the deities, and the gods that were associated with death and the afterlife.

Patch and Hainline said they would like *Divine Egypt*'s visitors to leave the exhibition with "an appreciation for the complexity and flexibility" of ancient Egypt. They said, "These artworks offer a window into how the ancient Egyptians made sense of the world and tried to answer questions we still ask today."

3 highlights of the show

Sacred carving

The work of art shown at right is a relief (raised image made on a flat surface). It depicts Maat, the goddess of truth and justice, who is identified by an ostrich feather.

Spirit guides

Several life-size statues depict deities with animal heads, such as Anubis (right). He led dead people to the afterlife, and his head is thought to be a type of Egyptian wolf that lives in the desert and spends time in cemeteries.

Divine family

This pendant (right) features the trio of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, a famous divine family in ancient Egyptian culture. The gold is a symbol of the skin of the gods, and the blue lapis represents the hair of the gods.

SO BIG!
During the Ice Age, there was a type of otter that could grow to about 10 feet long and weigh more than 400 pounds.

TV series brings Ice Age to life

Prehistoric Planet—the natural history series made by experts from the worlds of wildlife films, science, and Hollywood—is returning with a new installment. *Prehistoric Planet: Ice Age* looks like a typical nature documentary, but it features animals made using computer-generated 3D imagery. It give viewers the feeling they've traveled back in time to see life on Earth during the Pleistocene epoch (about 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago). The series hits Apple TV+ on November 26.

During the Ice Age, animals on Earth were mainly mammals. Despite the time period's name, there were cold and tropical regions. Executive producer Mike Gunton told *The Week Junior* it was a "phenomenally interesting time in the history of the planet" because many creatures and habitats in the world today were established in that era.

The animals in the show include snow sloths, scimitar-toothed cats, and woolly mammoths. Although no one has ever seen those extinct animals alive, Darren Naish, a paleozoologist (scientist who studies fossil animals and plants), worked on the series to ensure the depictions were based in scientific fact. He told *The Week Junior* the team relied on "multiple lines of evidence," including animal specimens found in frozen ground.

A prehistoric armadillo

Naish said some of the most exciting species to see are megafauna, such as a giant meat-eating rat kangaroo, a predatory koala, and a car-sized armadillo. There are also tiny elephant relatives known as stegodons. His hope is that viewers will be "wowed by the wonder of this world and how beautiful and extraordinary planet Earth is and was at that time."

READER RECOMMENDS

Cool Runnings *PG (Disney+ or rent on other major platforms)*
"This movie was inspired by the real Jamaican bobsled team from the 1988 Winter Olympics. It follows Derice, a fast runner who dreams of going to the Summer Olympics. But during the qualifying race, another runner trips and causes a big crash, and Derice loses his chance to compete. Instead of giving up, he decides to start a bobsled team and becomes the driver. His best friend Sanka, who is very funny, becomes the brakeman. The other team members are shy Junior and competitive Yul. This movie is hilarious and teaches you not to give up." Sean, 8, California

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Prep & Landing: The Snowball Protocol
(Disney Channel) November 27 at 7 p.m. ET (Disney+)
This new holiday special is part of a beloved franchise about elves Lanny and Wayne, who prepare homes for Santa's Christmas Eve arrival. In their latest adventure, the pair are sent on a top-secret mission that doesn't go as planned.

WondLa
(Apple TV+)
The best-selling *The Search for WondLa* books inspired this series, which is set in a future where Earth—now called Orbona—is inhabited by alien species. In the new final season, human teen Eva goes on a dangerous mission as she tries to unite two worlds and save the planet.

Is It Cake? Holiday
(Netflix)
The popular competition series is back with a spin-off for the holiday season. Six all-star cake artists, including three returning contestants, try to fool the judges with masterpieces that look like real holiday items, such as Christmas trees.

APPLE TV+ (3); DISNEY (2); COURTESY OF NETFLIX; ON LEFT PAGE: ANNA-MARIE KELLEN/THE MET (4); MATHIEU RABEAU, ©MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, DIST. RMN-GRAND PALAIS/ART RESOURCE, NY

WOW!
The record for the world's largest rubber band ball was set by one that weighed more than 9,000 pounds and was more than 6 feet tall.

Once Upon a Katamari

Roll around a growing ball

Once Upon a Katamari is a puzzle action-adventure game. It was recently released for the PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S, Nintendo Switch, and PC.

The game is part of the Katamari Damacy series, which began in 2004. It was created by Japanese developer Keita Takahashi, who was inspired by Japanese children's ball-rolling games. In the original game, the roller was a tiny prince, the son of the King of All Cosmos. After the king smashes the universe to bits, it's up to his son to create giants balls that form new stars and planets.

All the Katamari games are based on the same idea. You start with a small, sticky ball that you roll around the colorful game world. As it moves, it picks up little items such as paper clips, crayons, and dice. Every item you pick up makes the ball bigger, and that means it can roll up larger objects, such as chairs, bikes, cows, street signs, cars, houses, and even stadiums.

The prince

Once Upon a Katamari is the first game in the series to be released in 14 years. It is easy to play, even for newcomers. It has you rolling a ball through historical eras such as the Jurassic period and ancient Japan. The prince is still the hero, but you can play as one of his 68 cousins too. You can also customize your character, which is a fun way to help you stand out in the online multiplayer KatamariBall mode. In that version, you compete against up to three friends to see who can roll up the biggest ball of objects within a time limit.

Like all Katamari games, this one has quirky, catchy Japanese music that you may be humming long after you're done playing.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

MILLION BAZILLION

Major podcast platforms

On this family-friendly podcast from Marketplace, a public radio program about finance, the hosts explore how money works through fun stories, humor, and questions from young listeners. You can learn about topics such as the national debt and why $2 bills still exist.

APP OF THE WEEK

FATHOMVERSE

Apple App Store, Google Play

In this ocean exploration game, you help scientists study marine life by identifying animals in actual underwater imagery. It's not just for fun: Your discoveries train real artificial intelligence models that improve marine research and global biodiversity monitoring.

CHANNEL OF THE WEEK

WEIRD EXPLORER

youtube.com/@WeirdExplorer

Since 2012, Jared Rydelek has been on a mission to find and taste every one of the 70,000 edible fruit species in the world. He'll never get to them all, but you can follows his efforts as he travels around sampling items such as rare mangos, velvet apples, and the avocado-like butter pear.

BANDAI NAMCO (2); MARKETPLACE; FATHOMNET; WEIRD EXPLORER VIA YOUTUBE

BOOK OF THE WEEK

The Poisoned King

By Katherine Rundell, illustrated by Ashley Mackenzie
(Yearling)

This sequel to the blockbuster *Impossible Creatures* picks up shortly after that novel ends. Christopher, a young boy from modern-day London, is summoned to the Archipelago, a magical group of islands, for another mission. Here, in this home to mythical beasts, dragons are being mysteriously killed. Jacques, Christopher's old dragon pal, explains that only an outsider to their realm can be trusted to investigate. Meanwhile, Princess Anya Argen has a riddle of her own to unravel. Her father has been framed for poisoning her grandfather. She must prove her dad's innocence and stop the true murderer from gaining the throne. Christopher and Anya's quests collide, and they find themselves battling a mutual enemy together. Despite coming from very different worlds, they form a strong team. In this series, slated to include five books, the author brings the Archipelago to life in vivid detail. The chapters are brief and tell the story at a rapid, exciting pace. The art shines, particularly in the book's Bestiary, an illustrated appendix featuring 19 of the Archipelago's animals. *Ages 10 and up*

ASK THE AUTHOR

Katherine Rundell

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

What inspired this book?
I wanted to write a story that would have mystery, murder, and revenge, but I also wanted it to feel like a huge adventure with some comedy and good jokes.

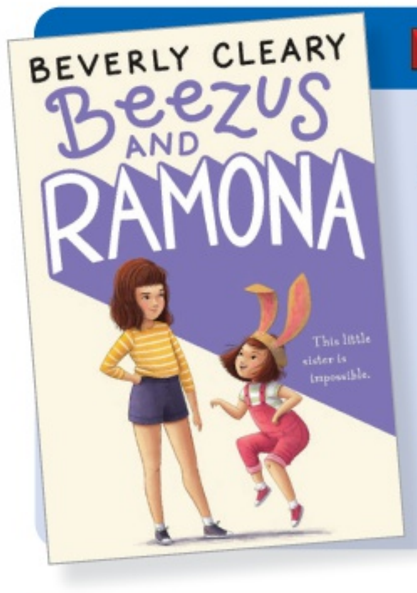
Who's your favorite creature from the story?
I adored creating Jacques—the tiny dragon. He's small enough to sit in your palm but has enough fire in him to burn down a school.

Do you relate to any of the characters?
Christopher, who watches the world and who loves to be around living creatures, has quite a lot of my childhood self in him.

Where do you most enjoy writing?
I like to write outside, if I can. I cherish the feeling of being under the sky.

Apple or pumpkin pie?
Apple! Especially with lots of custard.

READER RECOMMENDS



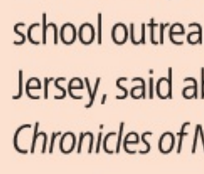
Beezus and Ramona *By Beverly Cleary*

"This story is told from the point of view of Beatrice, nicknamed Beezus. She has a little sister named Ramona, who is incredibly annoying. Ramona is just plain exasperating! This story is all about the relationship between Beezus and Ramona and their sibling fights. You will come to love these characters that treasured author Beverly Cleary brought to life!" Sophie, 9, Washington

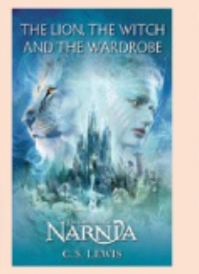
Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 classic books that stand the test of time

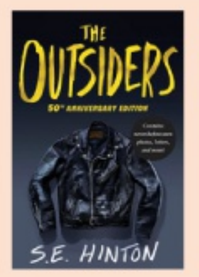
These titles are as entertaining now as when they were first published.



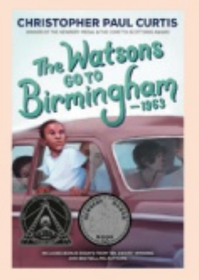
Holes
By Louis Sachar
(Yearling)
In this 1999 Newbery Medal winner, a teen is falsely convicted of stealing and is sent to a camp, where he has to dig holes. It's "about the power of friendship when the odds are stacked against you," said Merri V. Lindgren of Cooperative Children's Book Center in Madison, Wisconsin. *Ages 10 and up*



The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
By C.S. Lewis
(HarperCollins)
"This 1950 adventure story has themes of good and evil," Valerie Coughlin, a school outreach librarian in Hoboken, New Jersey, said about the second book in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. "The world-building is very accessible, making it a good fantasy read for younger readers." *Ages 8 and up*



The Outsiders
By S.E. Hinton
(Penguin)
This 1960s coming-of-age novel centers on a rivalry between two gangs of teenagers. "The relatability and realness of the characters make this book worth reading," Coughlin said. "These characters deal with grief, loss, and class issues, on top of the stresses of being a young adult." *Ages 12 and up*



The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963
By Christopher Paul Curtis
(Yearling)
A Black family from Flint, Michigan, takes a road trip to Alabama, where they encounter racially charged violence. "It's both a powerful novel that mirrors events in our nation in 1963 and a funny book about a memorable family road trip," said Lindgren. *Ages 10 and up*

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
Eating Kentucky Fried Chicken on December 24 has been a tradition in Japan for more than 50 years.

Enjoy fun family traditions

Share special memories together, and learn how to make new ones.

You may have fun traditions with your family, especially during the holiday season. Whether walking through the neighborhood to see the festive lights, baking special treats together, or watching a favorite movie, these traditions can help you feel closer to the people you love. You can also create new traditions together. Here's how to get started.

Take stock of your special times

Make a list of your family's traditions. This time of year, they could include making a family recipe, taking a family photo for a card, lighting candles together, or getting matching winter pajamas. Ask the adults in your family what traditions they remember from their childhoods. They might enjoy reviving their favorites!

Brainstorm new ideas

Next, gather ideas from your family for new traditions. You could discuss making a special annual outing, like visiting a nice restaurant or seeing a show. However, traditions can also be simple. For example, before dinner on Thanksgiving Day, you could watch the annual parade on television, gather relatives to play a game of football, or serve others less fortunate at a soup kitchen. You and your family could also establish new traditions on the morning after a big holiday, like going on a family hike or setting up a bagel bar with toppings like cream cheese, honey, and jam.

You can start new traditions.

Get everyone on board

Many families have members who love to organize and gather everyone. Think about who those people are in your family, whether it's a parent, aunt, uncle, or grandparent. They can help you create the "guest list" for a special family gathering, like a cookie swap or board game night, and help you pick a date and time. They can also plan a video call with relatives who live far away but would want to share in the fun.

Create a keepsake

Traditions are a great way to make memories with your family. Consider taking some pictures while you're enjoying your traditions (see the box at right for suggestions) and framing a photo to remind you all year long of the fun you had. If you try a new tradition this year, take a moment later to reflect on it. Did your family enjoy it? Is there anything you would change next time? The point of a tradition is to do it again. It's totally OK for it to grow and change in a way that works best for your family.

Take a great photo

The holidays are a perfect time to get a picture of your family together! Here's how.

Be comfortable When people feel at ease, whether cozy at home in matching pajamas or gathered in hats and scarves on the front doorstep, they will look more natural in photos.

Check the light Indoors, avoid overhead bright lights that cast shadows. Outdoors, position everyone in full, natural shade.

Set up the camera Ask a friend or neighbor to take the photo, or set a timer on the camera with an adult's help.

Mix it up Try several poses, from smiling to silly. Afterward, enjoy choosing the best shots together!

Bake a fudgy chocolate cake

Find this recipe and more in the new kids' cookbook *Sweet and Salty!*

Ingredients

FOR THE CAKE:

- Butter or cooking spray
- 1½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup Dutch-process or natural cocoa powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup cold milk or water
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar or white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

FOR THE FROSTING:

- 1½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup half-and-half (for a nondairy icing, substitute ⅓ cup cold water)

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease an 8- or 9-inch round pan with cooking spray or butter, then line the pan with parchment paper. Grease parchment with cooking spray or butter.
2. Make the cake: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa, salt, and baking soda. In a separate bowl, whisk together the milk or water, the oil, vinegar, and vanilla.
3. Pour the wet ingredients into the bowl of dry ingredients, then stir with a rubber spatula or a spoon until thoroughly combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
4. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until a cake tester or toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Remove from the oven and set on a wire rack to cool in the pan.
5. Make the frosting: Combine chocolate chips and half-and-half in a small saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring, until the chips melt. Stir until smooth, let cool for 5 minutes, then pour over the cooled cake. Use the back of a spoon, a butter knife, or an offset spatula to spread frosting over top and sides of cake. Top with rainbow sprinkles. Makes 8–10 servings.

SAVE THE DATE!
National Cake Day, a day to enjoy and share the dessert in its many forms, is November 26.

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the stove or oven.

RECIPE: KING ARTHUR BAKING COMPANY, PHOTO: RICK HOLBROOK; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

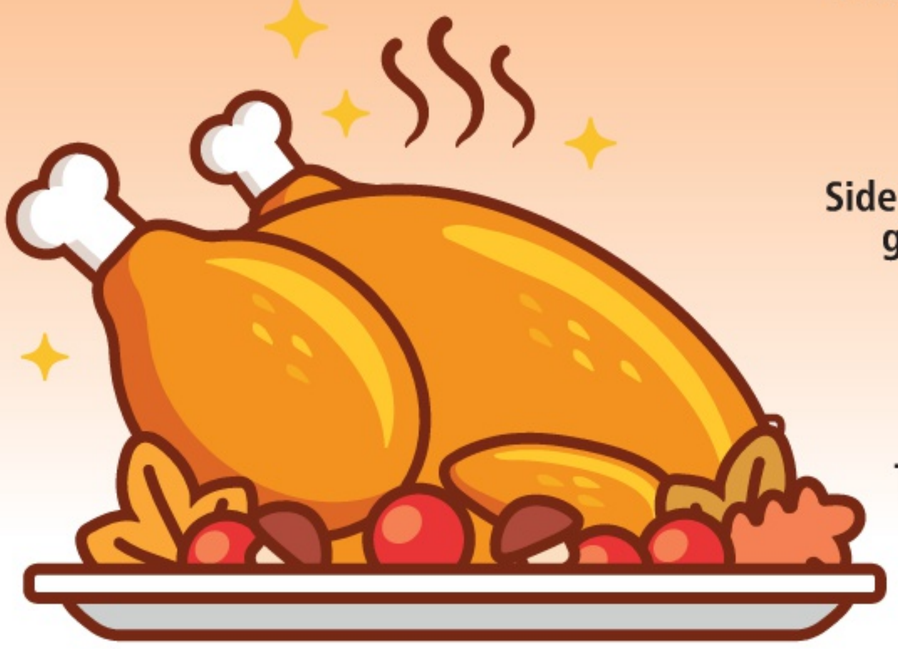
LIFE HACK

SET THE TABLE FOR A GATHERING

Something you can do to make meals feel special, particularly at the holidays, is to decorate the table. First, look for items that match the season or the colors of the holiday. For Thanksgiving, you could collect pinecones, evergreen branches, and autumn leaves on a walk, then place a few of them at each person's setting. Or you could make a festive centerpiece by arranging these natural items in a bowl or glass vase with a flameless LED candle. You could also use cardstock or folded paper to create place cards for each person and put it by their plate. Write their name on the front. On the back, surprise them with one reason you are grateful for them.

Word ladder

To change the word DARK into the word MEAT, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.



D A R K

Find a place to leave the car ▶ _ _ _ _

Prepare to travel to faraway relatives ▶ _ _ _ _

Eat off the ground like poultry does ▶ _ _ _ _

Mountaintop ▶ _ _ _ _

Side dish of small green veggies ▶ _ _ _ _

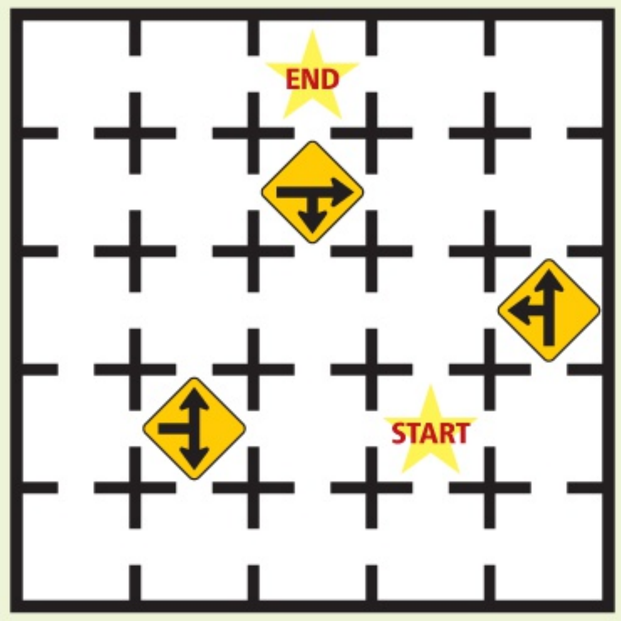
Oceans ▶ _ _ _ _

Place at the Thanksgiving dinner table ▶ _ _ _ _

M E A T

DETOURS

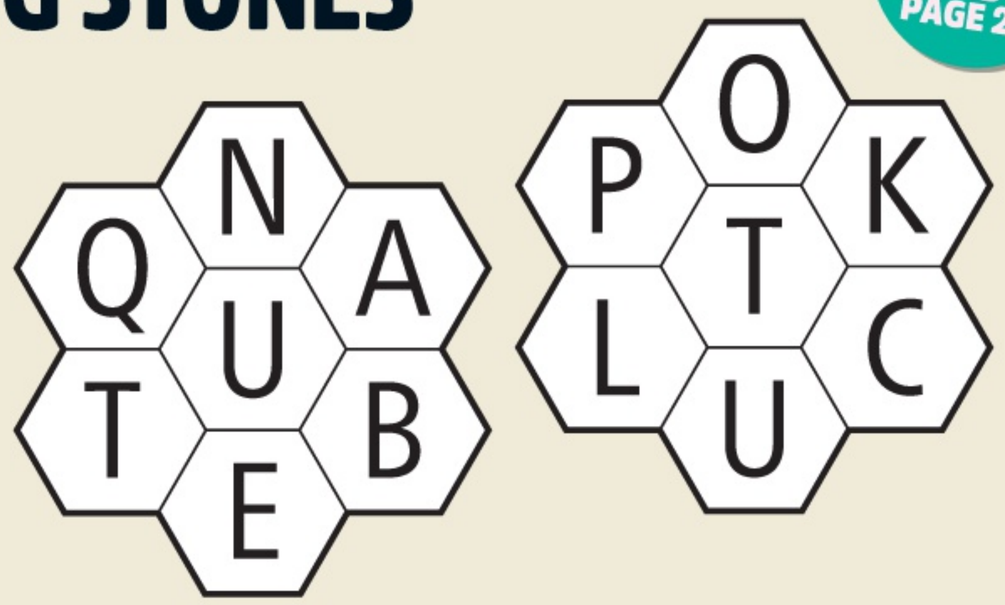
Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every single square without crossing itself. For squares with signs, you may only enter at the arrow's base, and you may only make a turn in the direction of an arrow shown. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



STEPPING STONES

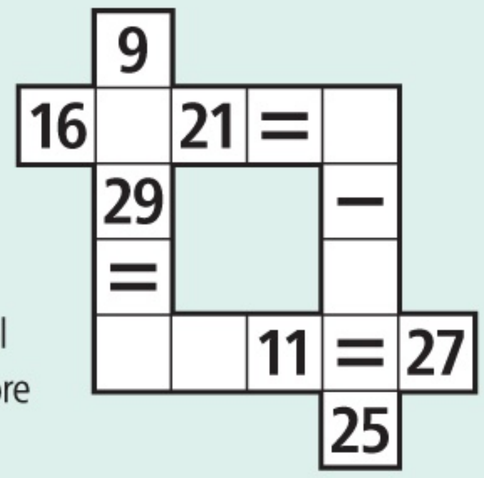
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Each figure hides the seven-letter name of a kind of meal. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once.



Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, −, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once.



Spot the difference

These two pictures of cakes appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

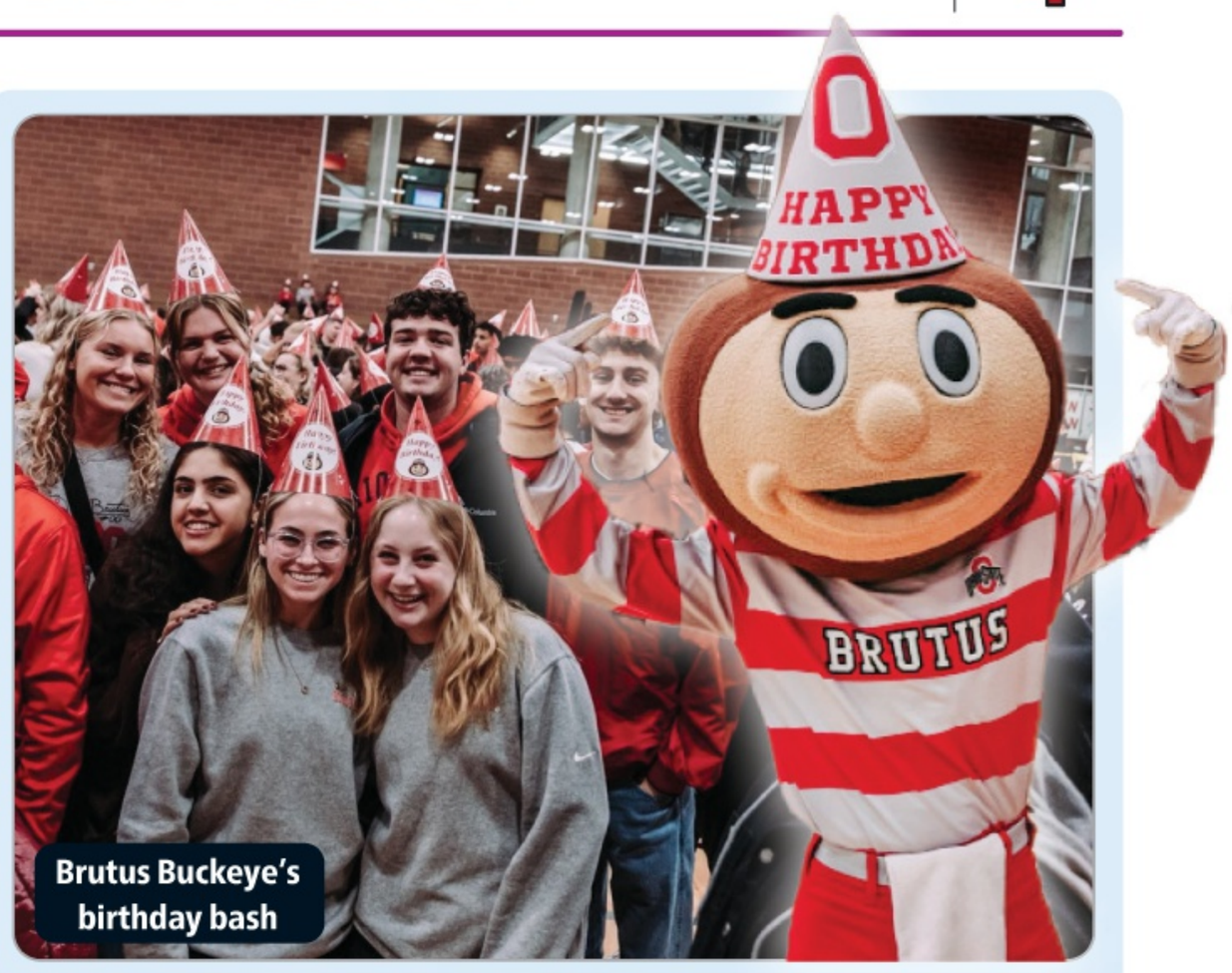
Detours hint: Start by moving down, then to the right.

That's unbelievable!

Would you gobble up these Turkey Day treats?

Have your dinner for dessert

A new line of Oreo cookies was inspired by Thanksgiving dinner. Each sandwich cookie is covered in fudge that's infused with one of six flavors: turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce, sweet potato, creamed corn, caramel apple pie, or pumpkin pie. The feast of flavors earned mixed reactions on social media, with one commenter saying turkey cookies are a step "too far," while another said, "This sounds disgusting. I wanna try them." Packs of 12 cookies in a giant Oreo-shaped tin sold out online within a week.



Brutus Buckeye's birthday bash

A hat bonanza at Ohio State

Happy birthday, Brutus Buckeye! The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, celebrated its mascot's 60th birthday with a festive feat. The college broke a record for the most cone-shaped party hats at one event, as 1,924 people sported the pointy headwear to honor Brutus at a campus gym. The previous record, set in 2019, involved 1,161 people at a school in the UK. Besides a hat, participants also got cupcakes and ice cream at the Ohio celebration, which the university called "the biggest birthday party ever."

Kimmon licked the competition.

Which pet is the speediest eater?

Move over, Joey Chestnut—there's a new competitive-eating champ on the scene. In Bangkok, Thailand, 187 dogs and 236 cats competed over two days to see which one was the speediest snacker. Held during the annual Pet Variety Exhibition, the event featured salmon treats in squeeze tubes. A mixed-breed cat named Kimmon downed the whole tube in 49.42 seconds to win a prize of about $60 and more treats. "He usually has a grumpy face but lights up if there's food in front of him," his owner said.

Real OR fake?

Were they en route to nicer skin?

Beauty treatments on the go

A wellness company has created a mobile "Glo on the Go" clinic in London, England, where adults can get a 12-minute beauty treatment in the back of a taxi. The company came up with this bright idea to let people try its new LED light mask, which emits certain colors of light that are said to promote skin health. Once the taxi picked up a customer on a street corner, the rider had the opportunity to wear the mask on the way to their destination. Is this story true, or is it a glaring lie?*

*Real! The Glo on the Go mobile clinic was designed to promote a new 12-minute skincare mask. During the one-day special event in the UK, the treatments and taxi rides were free.

OREO; OSU (2); GETTY IMAGES; THERABODY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Your turn

Editor's note

We always love receiving letters and photographs from our readers, but the submissions you see at right made us especially happy. After we showcased the publication of *Partypooper*, the 20th book in Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, in Issue 289, we invited you to send us photos of yourselves holding any of the titles in that series—and you did not disappoint us! We received many more photos than we had space to feature, and we enjoyed every one. We also plan to share the good wishes with Jeff, and we know he will appreciate them too! At *The Week Junior*, it's our mission to celebrate reading—so please keep sending us photos of you with your favorite books, along with a quote about why you love them. We're also eager to receive your book reviews for our Reader Recommends column (see the instructions on page 23). Above all, we hope you'll keep reading everything you love to read!

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

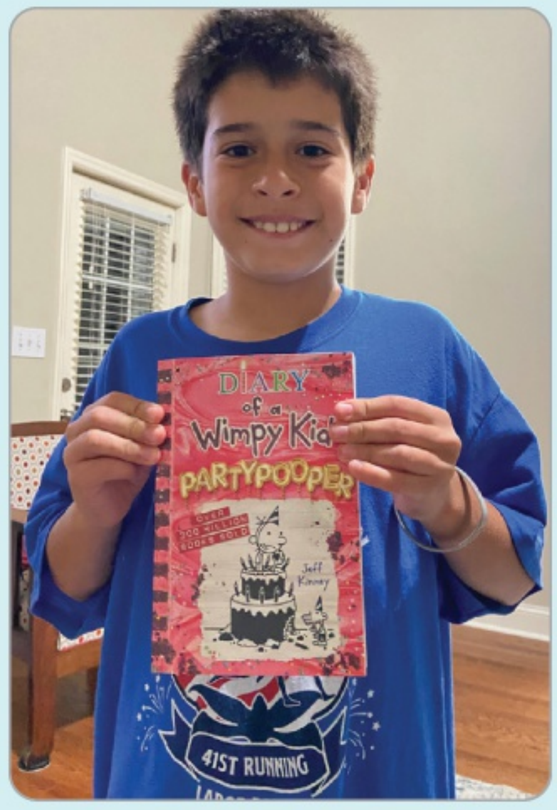
American Brain Foundation

This organization's mission is to find a cure for brain diseases and disorders. Since 1992, it has worked with researchers and organizations that study brain diseases, such as Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis, to develop cutting-edge prevention and treatment strategies. It has provided nearly $45 million in funding for research. Find out more at americanbrainfoundation.org.

AMERICAN BRAIN FOUNDATION

YOUR PHOTOS CELEBRATING JEFF KINNEY!

▲ **"These books made me laugh all summer—I read the whole series!"** Saanvi, 7, California



◀ **"I saw the new *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book in *The Week Junior*, so I decided to get it for myself!"** Andrew, 10, Alabama

◀ **"I bought *Partypooper* from my school book fair the day my magazine arrived in the mail."** Jaeyul, 10, Georgia

▼ **"I read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Partypooper*!"** Ayo, 7, Maryland

◀ **"I have the whole set of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books!"** Brooklyn, 9, Washington

▼ **"I love reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*!"** Ethan, 8, Nebraska

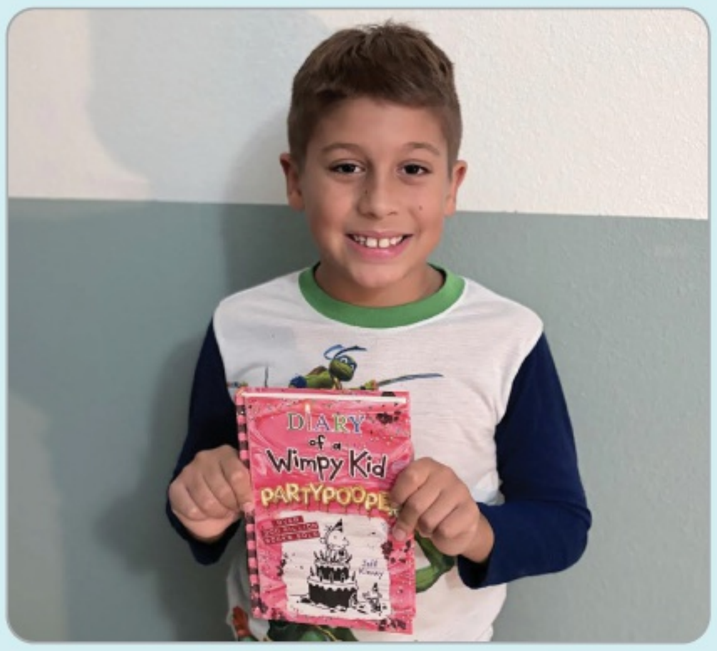
THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

Your turn

Thank you to everyone who sent us photos congratulating Jeff Kinney on the 20th book in his *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. If you have a photo of yourself holding a book you love, we'd love to see it. Have an adult email it to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you'd like to tell us about why you enjoyed the book.

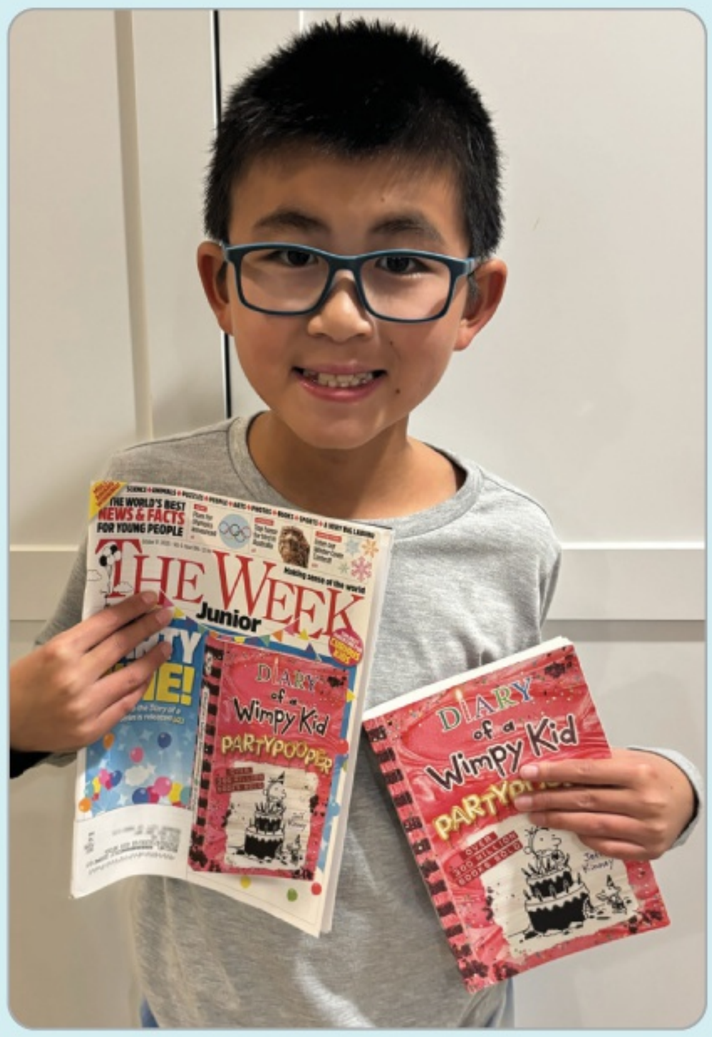
▲ **"The *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books always make me laugh!"** Aarish, 6, New Jersey

◀ **" I was excited to see *Partypooper* featured in *The Week Junior*!"** Allison, 9, Virginia



◀ **"I like the books because they are full of funny and weird adventures."** Cyrus, 9, Arkansas

▼ **"I couldn't wait to get the new *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book!"** Lucy, 8, New York



▲ **"I like the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series because Greg is funny!"** Dylan, 11, California

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Word ladder
DARK
PARK
PACK
PECK
PEAK
PEAS
SEAS
SEAT
MEAT

Stepping stones
banquet, potluck

		9		
16	+	21	=	37
29				−
=				12
38	−	11	=	27
		25		

Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** a) 1924 **2** True **3** Florida **4** a) Maryland **5** Jacques **6** False. Pennies can legally be used as money. **7** King of All Cosmos **8** False. It will begin with the women's 100-meter final. **9** c) Apex **10** True **11** 172 **12** True **13** Aurora borealis **14** b) Coffee beans **15** a) Cranberry sauce

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City was first held in which year?

a) 1924

b) 1934

c) 1944

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? Baseball player Shohei Ohtani has won four MLB MVP awards.

True ☐ False ☐

3 Researchers believe flamingos are reestablishing a home in which US state?

---

4 The Smith Island cake is the official dessert of which state?

a) Maryland b) Colorado

c) Missouri

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

5 In the book *The Poisoned King*, what is the name of Christopher's dragon friend?

---

6 True or false? There are about 300 billion pennies in circulation, but they cannot legally be used as money.

True ☐ False ☐

7 What is the name of the prince's father in the Katamari Damacy video game series?

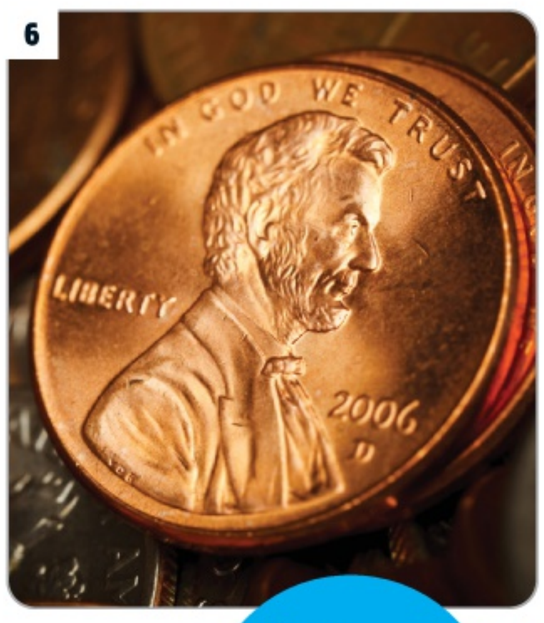
---

8 True or false? The first night of competition at the 2028 Summer Olympics will begin with the men's 100-meter track final.

True ☐ False ☐

7

6



9

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

3

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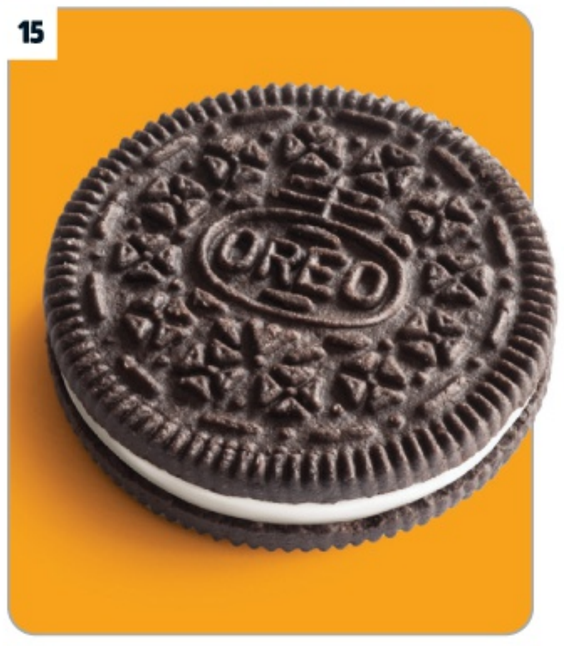

9 What is the name of the massive stegosaurus fossil that was recently dismantled, studied, and moved?

a) Griffin b) Sue c) Apex

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? The Royal Mint in the UK is making jewelry using gold from recycled electronic devices.

True ☐ False ☐

11 The women's basketball team from Grace College recently set a record by scoring how many points in a game?

---

12 True or false? Ancient Egyptians are believed to have worshipped more than 1,500 gods and goddesses.

True ☐ False ☐

13 The northern lights, which were recently seen across the US, are also known by what other name?

---

14 Which crop are farmers in Thailand learning to grow in order to keep elephants away?

a) Bananas

b) Coffee beans

c) Sugarcane

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 A new line of Thanksgiving-inspired Oreos includes which of these flavors?

a) Cranberry sauce

b) Creamed spinach

c) Pecan pie

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

THE WEEK Junior

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